DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 452 739 FL 026 713

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TITLE	Two-Way Immersion Programs: Features and Statistics. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-FL-01-01
PUB DATE	2001-03-00
NOTE	4p.; Work conducted by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence.
CONTRACT	ED-99-CO-0008; R306A60001-96
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 4646 40th Street NW, Washington, DC 20016. For full text: http://www.cal.org/ericcll/DIGEST.
PUB TYPE	ERIC Publications (071) -- ERIC Digests in Full Text (073)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Databases; *Directories; *English (Second Language); *Immersion Programs; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; *Student Characteristics; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests; *Two Way Bilingual Education; United States

ABSTRACT

Since 1991, the Center for Applied Linguistics has monitored the growth of two-way immersion (TWI) programs in the United States. This information is published online in the Directory of Two-Way Immersion Programs in the United States (2000), accessible at http://www.cal.org/twi/directory. Programs listed in the Directory conform to this general definition of TWI through adherence to the following criteria: (1) language-minority and language-majority students are integrated for at least 50% of the day at all grade levels; (2) content and literacy instruction in both languages are provided to all students; and (3) language-minority and language-majority students are balanced, with each group making up one-third to two-thirds of the total student population. The information in the Directory is self-reported; it is based on responses to a questionnaire completed by representatives of the programs listed. A new feature of the directory is a search function that makes it possible to identify programs that share characteristics, such as location, student demographics, and program design. This digest summarizes findings from data in the directory regarding features of TWI programs, students, and staff. National data are presented, along with similar data from the three states with the most programs--California (86), Texas (34), and New York (20). (JSS)

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ERIC DIGEST EDO-FL-01-01 MARCH 2001

Two-Way Immersion Programs: Features and Statistics

ELIZABETH R. HOWARD AND JULIE SUGARMAN, CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Since 1991, the Center for Applied Linguistics has monitored the growth of two-way immersion (TWI) programs in the United States. This information is published online in the *Directory of Two-Way Immersion Programs in the United States* (2000), accessible at www.cal.org/twi/directory.

TWI programs integrate language-minority and language-majority students for all or most of the school day and strive to promote bilingualism and biliteracy in addition to grade-level academic achievement for all students (Christian, 1994). Programs listed in the Directory conform to this general definition of TWI through adherence to the following criteria: 1) language-minority and language-majority students are integrated for at least 50% of the day at all grade levels; 2) content and literacy instruction in both languages are provided to all students; and 3) language-minority and language-majority students are balanced, with each group making up one third to two thirds of the total student population.

The information in the Directory is self-reported; it is based on responses to a questionnaire completed by representatives of the programs listed. A new feature of the directory is a search function that makes it possible to identify programs that share characteristics, such as location, student demographics, and program design. This digest summarizes findings from data in the directory regarding features of TWI programs, students, and staff. National data are presented, along with similar data from the three states with the most programs—California (86), Texas (34), and New York (20).

Overview

The first TWI program in the United States began in 1963. For the next 20 years, the growth of TWI programs was minimal, with fewer than 10 documented programs in operation before 1981. The majority of programs in existence today were established during the past two decades. The 2000 Directory includes 248 TWI programs in 23 states and the District of Columbia. There has also been considerable expansion within existing programs: Many have reported adding new grade levels each year, and 40 programs now extend into middle or high school.

Program location. The majority of TWI programs are in public schools; only four are operated by private schools. Nearly a quarter of the public school programs operate in specialized environments: 11 are housed in charter schools and 53 in magnet schools. California has the most programs operating in specialized environments, with eight charter school programs and 22 magnet school programs. Relatively few TWI programs (32) are whole-school programs. About three quarters of the elementary programs (191) operate as strands within schools, as do all of the secondary programs (32). Twenty-five programs did not respond to this question.

Languages of instruction. Most TWI programs are Spanish/English (234). The other programs are Chinese/English (5), French/English (5), Korean/English (3), and Navajo/English (2). (One school houses both a Spanish/English and a Chinese/English program.) The majority of students enrolled in these programs are native speakers of one or both languages of instruction. In 37 programs, however, more than 1% of the students are native speakers of a language not used in the program (i.e., third language speakers). In nine programs, 5% are third language speakers.

Program Models and Literacy Instruction

A key decision in initiating a TWI program is the choice of a program model. Nationally, one of the two most common program models is *minority-language dominant*, which is used in 104 schools (42%). In these "90/10" or "80/20" programs, the minority language is used for instruction 80-90% of the time in the primary grades, with the instructional ratio of the minority language to English generally reaching 50/50 by fourth grade. An additional 85 programs (33%) are *balanced programs* ("50/50"); the amount of instructional time is equal in the two languages at all grade levels. Only five programs (2%) separate students by native language for part of the day in the primary grades and provide differing amounts of instruction in the two languages. Thirty-two programs (13%) are middle or high school programs, with models that differ from the elementary model (Montone & Loeb, 2000). Twenty-two programs (9%) provided no response.

An interesting pattern emerges through examination of the predominant program models used in California, Texas, and New York. In California, most programs (63%) are minority-language dominant. In Texas, the percentages of minority-language dominant programs (41%) and balanced programs (47%) are roughly equal. In New York, the majority of programs (60%) use the balanced model. There seem to be regional norms for TWI programs, with no single program model being dominant across the three states. California has the highest percentage of middle and high school programs (19% of the state's TWI programs).

Another essential decision that all TWI programs must make is the language(s) in which initial literacy instruction will be provided. Nationally, 31% of the programs use the minority language for initial literacy instruction for all students, 22% provide initial literacy instruction in both languages to all students, 20% separate the children by native language for initial literacy instruction, 1% use English for all students, 14% do not serve grade levels that require initial literacy instruction, and 12% are unreported.

Compared to the national picture, California has a larger percentage of programs (53%) that use the minority language to introduce literacy instruction to all children, and smaller percentages that use both languages for all students (15%) or separate the students by native language (5%). The pattern in Texas more closely mirrors that of the nation, with 41% using the minority language for all students, 26% using both languages for all students, and 18% separating the students by native language. In New York, only one program (5%) reported using the minority language for initial literacy instruction for all students, while 20% separate the students by native language, and 40% use both languages for all students. It is interesting to note that while the three main approaches to initial literacy instruction are practiced in all three states, regional norms appear to influence the extent to which each of the three options is implemented. The percentages do not add up to 100%, because they do not include programs that do not teach primary grades nor programs that did not provide responses to this question.

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Student Demographics

The stereotypical TWI program is composed of two populations: Latino, low-income, native Spanish speakers and White, middle class, native English speakers. Although there are certainly programs that conform to this stereotype, directory searches indicate there is greater diversity in the student populations of current TWI programs than the stereotype suggests.

Racial/ethnic diversity. Because students who are classified as native speakers of the minority language generally belong to a single racial or ethnic group (e.g., Latino in the case of native Spanish speakers), the racial and ethnic make-up of the native English speakers is a more useful indicator of the overall diversity of TWI programs. Nationally, a majority of TWI programs (54%) have a mixture of ethnicities, with no one ethnic group making up more than 75% of the native English speakers. Another 34% of programs have a predominant racial or ethnic group among their native English speakers, but the specific racial or ethnic make-up of that group varies across programs:

% of programs	race/ethnicity of more than 75% of native English speakers
17%	White
13%	Latino
2%	African-American
1%	Asian
1%	Native American
12%	no response from program

Like the national norm, both California and New York have a majority of programs with no clear racial or ethnic majority among native English speakers; however, the percentages of such programs in these states are higher than the national figure (54%), with 66% and 60% respectively. At 35%, Texas has a much lower percentage of programs with no clear racial or ethnic majority among its native English speakers. It also has a much higher percentage of programs where more than 75% of the native English speakers are Latino (35% compared to 7% for California and 10% for New York) and a slightly higher percentage of programs where more than 75% of the native English speakers are White (21% compared to 13% for California and 15% for New York). There are no programs in Texas or New York that have a majority of African Americans or Asians, and no programs in any of the three states have a majority of Native Americans.

Socioeconomic status. Because eligibility for free or reduced lunch is determined by family income, children who participate are often classified as being at risk for low academic performance due to poverty. Working with this definition, TWI programs appear to serve a sizable at-risk population of both native English speakers and language minority students. Nationally, about one third of programs (80 schools or 32%) report that more than half of both native English speakers and language minority students participate in a free or reduced school lunch program. California has 19 programs (22%) in which more than half of both the native English speakers and language minority students receive free or reduced lunch, Texas has 17 (50%), and New York has 9 (45%).

Data confirm that there are more low-income language minority students than low-income native English speakers enrolled in TWI programs. Nearly one quarter of the programs (60 programs or 24%) report that more than half of their language minority students and less than half of their native English speakers receive free or reduced lunch, but no schools report that more than half of their native English speakers and less than half of their language minority students receive free or reduced lunch. This profile holds for each of the three states. In California, 30 programs (35%) report that more than half of their language minority students and less than half of their native English speakers receive free or reduced lunch. Texas has 8 such programs (24%), and New York has one (5%).

Staffing

A serious concern of TWI programs is the limited availability of qualified bilingual teachers and support staff. (Support staff includes instructional assistants, bilingual program coordinators, parent liaisons, and so forth.) However, more than half (54%) of all TWI programs reported that 100% of their teachers are proficient in both program languages. The percentage in California is even higher, with 70% of the programs reporting that 100% of their teachers are bilingual in the languages of instruction. In Texas (40%) and New York (45%), the percentages are just below the national figure, with slightly less than half of the programs in each state reporting that all teachers are bilingual.

Nationally, only 29% of TWI programs report that 100% of their support staff are proficient in both languages of instruction. Again, California has a higher percentage than the national figure, with 33% of programs reporting that 100% of the support staff are bilingual. Texas also has a higher percentage than the nation (44%), and interestingly, a slightly higher percentage of programs in which 100% of support staff are bilingual than programs in which 100% of teachers are bilingual. New York is just below the national average, with only 20% of its programs reporting that all teachers and support staff are bilingual in the languages of instruction. Fewer than 10% of programs, nationally and for all three states, report that fewer than half of their teachers and staff are proficient in both languages.

Conclusion

This digest provides a more detailed description of TWI programs, students, and staff on a national level than has previously been documented. It also describes the variation in programs by geographical region, something that has not been discussed in the literature to this point. This digest can thus serve as a useful starting point for those conducting research on TWI programs. Practitioners in TWI programs may also find this document helpful as a way of placing their local situation in a national context. Finally, as many TWI programs are funded in part by federal grants from the U.S. Department of Education, this digest may be of interest to policymakers who want to know more about the types of programs and students that are supported through such grants.

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The work reported herein was conducted by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement of the U. S. Department of Education under Cooperative Agreement No. R306A60001-96.

This digest was prepared with funding from the U.S. Dept. of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Library of Education, under contract no. ED-99-CO-0008. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of ED, OERI, or NLE.